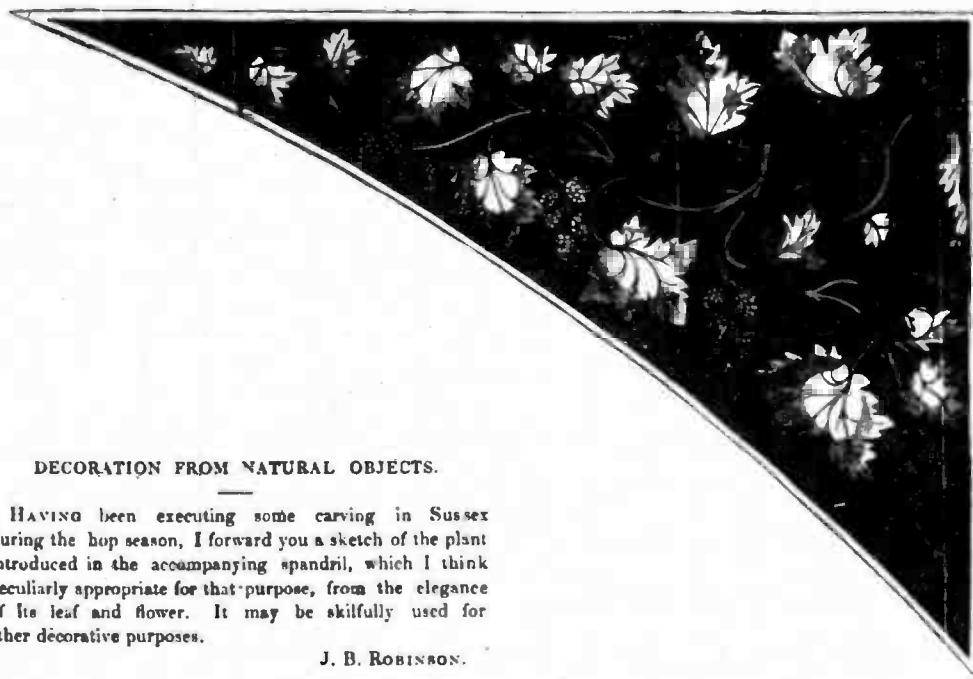


THE HOP IN DECORATION.



DECORATION FROM NATURAL OBJECTS.

HAVING been executing some carving in Sussex during the hop season, I forward you a sketch of the plant introduced in the accompanying spandril, which I think peculiarly appropriate for that purpose, from the elegance of its leaf and flower. It may be skilfully used for other decorative purposes.

J. B. ROBINSON.

Proportion.—I believe that all that has been written and taught about proportion, put together, is not to the architect worth the single rule, well enforced, "Have one large thing and several smaller things, or one principal thing and several inferior things, and bind them well together." Sometimes there may be a regular gradation, as between the heights of stories in good designs for houses; sometimes a monarch with a lowly train, as in the spire with its pinnacles: the varieties of arrangement are infinite, but the law is universal—have one thing above the rest, either by size, or office, or interest. Don't put the pinnacles without the spire. What a host of ugly church towers have we in England, with pinnacles at the corners, and none in the middle! How many buildings like King's College Chapel at Cambridge, looking like tables upside down, with their four legs in the air! What! it will be said, have not beasts four legs? Yes, but legs of different shapes, and with a head between them. So they have a pair of ears: and perhaps a pair of horns: but not at both ends. Knock down a couple of pinnacles at either end in King's College Chapel, and you will have a kind of proportion instantly. So in a cathedral you may have one tower in the centre, and two at the west end; or two at the west end only, though a worse arrangement: but you must not have two at the west and two at the east end, unless you have some central member to connect them; and even then, buildings are generally bad which have large balancing features at the extremities, and small connecting ones in the centre, because it is not easy then to make the centre dominant. The bird or moth may indeed have wide wings, because the size of the wing does not give supremacy to the wing. The head and life are the mighty things, and the plumes, however wide, are subordinate.

Colour in connection with Architecture.—I do not feel able to speak with any confidence respecting the touching of sculpture with colour. I would only note one point, that sculpture is the representation of an idea, while architecture is itself a real thing. The idea may, as I think, be left colourless, and coloured by the beholder's mind: but a reality ought to have reality in all its attributes: its colour should be as fixed as its form. I cannot, therefore, consider architecture as in any wise perfect without colour. Farther, as I have above noticed, I think the colours of architecture should be those of natural stones;

partly because more durable, but also because more perfect and graceful. For to conquer the harshness and deadness of tone laid upon stone or on gesso, needs the management and discretion of a true painter; and on this co-operation we must not calculate in laying down rules for general practice. If Titoret or Giorgione are at hand, and ask us for a wall to paint, we will alter our whole design for their sake, and become their servants; but we must, as architects, expect the aid of the common workman only; and the laying of colour by a mechanical hand, and its toning under a vulgar eye, are far more offensive than rudeness in cutting the stone.

Whatever harmonies there may be, are distinctly like those of two separate musical parts, coinciding here and there only—never discordant, but essentially different. I hold this, then, for the first great principle of architectural colour. Let it be visibly independent of form. Never paint a column with vertical lines, but always cross it. Never give separate mouldings separate colours (I know this is heresy, but I never shrink from any conclusions, however contrary to human authority, to which I am led by observance of natural principles); and in sculptured ornaments do not paint the leaves or figures (I cannot help the Elgin frieze) of one colour and their ground of another, but vary both the ground and the figures with the same harmony. Notice how nature does it in a variegated flower; not one leaf red and another white, but a point of red and a zone of white, or whatever it may be, to each. In certain places you may run your two systems closer, and here and there let them be parallel for a note or two, but see that the colours and the forms coincide only as two orders of mouldings do; the same for an instant, but each holding its own course. So single members may sometimes have single colours: as a bird's head is sometimes of one colour and its shoulders of another, you may make your capital one colour, and your shaft another; but in general the best place for colour is on broad surfaces, not on the points of interest in form. An animal is mottled on its breast and back, rarely on its paws or about its eyes; so put your variegation boldly on the flat wall and broad shaft, but be shy of it in the capital and moulding; in all cases it is a safe rule to simplify colour when form is rich, and vice versa; and I think it would be well in general to carve all capitals

and graceful ornaments in white marble, and so leave them.

Value of Architecture.—We may live without her, and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her. How cold is all history, how lifeless all imagery, compared to that which the living nation writes, and the uncorrupted marble bears! how many pages of doubtful record might we not often spare, for a few stones left one upon another! The ambition of the old Babel builders was well directed for this world: there are but two strong conquerors of the forgetfulness of men, poetry and architecture; and the latter in some sort includes the former, and is mightier in its reality; it is well to have, not only what men have thought and felt, but what their hands have handled, and their strength wrought, and their eyes beheld, all the days of their life. The age of Homer is surrounded with darkness, his very personality with doubt. Not so that of Pericles: and the day is coming when we shall confess, that we have learned more of Greece out of the crumbled fragments of her sculpture than even from her sweet singers or soldier historians. And if indeed there be any profit in our knowledge of the past, or any joy in the thought of being remembered hereafter, which can give strength to present exertion, or patience to present endurance, there are two duties respecting national architecture whose importance it is impossible to overrate: the first, to render the architecture of the day historical; and the second, to preserve, as the most precious of inheritances, that of past ages.

THE LATE AFFRAY AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY.—Mr. Evans, who assaulted the secretary on the rejection of his artistic labours, was sentenced lately at the Middlesex Sessions to pay to the Queen a fine of 25*l.*, and enter into his own recognizance in the sum of 40*l.*, with one surety in 20*l.*, to keep the peace for six months. The fine was paid, the recognizance entered into, and the surety given, on which the defendant was liberated. The case appeared to excite great interest.

ELECTRO-TELEGRAPHIC PROGRESS.—The Common Council of the City have agreed to offer no hinderance to Messrs. Blunt, C.E., in their intended deposit of the wires for their projected coast line of telegraph in the Thames, unless they prove a nuisance either to the public or to individuals.